

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1, 4, 7-10, 15 and 16 will have been amended and claims 13-14 and 18 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, claims 19-23 will have been submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Initially, Applicant would like to express his appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided.

Turning to the merits of the action, the Examiner has objected to claims 13-18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. By the present amendment, Applicant has amended the objected claims to be rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In this regard, Applicant notes that independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of allowable dependent claim 14 therein, independent claim 4 has been amended to include the features of allowable dependent claim 18 therein, and independent claim 7 has been amended to include the features of allowable dependent claim 13 therein. Applicant also notes that independent method claims 8-10 have been amended in the same manner as the related independent apparatus claims 1,4 and 7. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

By rewriting various limitations from the objected to claims into the various independent claims, Applicant does not in any manner acquiesce in the propriety of the Examiner's rejection. Rather, Applicant is merely taking such action in order to

expedite the allowance of the present application. Applicant respectfully submits, at least for the reasons set forth in the previous response, that the Examiner's rejections are inappropriate and the disclosures of the references relied upon are inadequate to anticipate or render unpatentable any of the claims in the present application.

The Examiner has rejected claims 7 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by SEKIGUCHI (U.S. Patent No. 6,898,627). The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5, 8, 9 and 11-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over FUJUKI (U.S. Patent No. 6,542,254) in view of WANG (U.S. Patent No. 6,757,891). The Examiner has rejected claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over FUJUKI (U.S. Patent No. 6,542,254) in view of WANG (U.S. Patent No. 6,757,891) and SEKIGUCHI (U.S. Patent No. 6,898,627).

As noted above, Applicant has amended the rejected claims to include the features of allowable dependent claims therein. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the above rejections have all been rendered moot.

Applicant again respectfully notes that the amendment of the claims has been made merely to advance the prosecution of the present application towards allowance and thus should not be taken as an acquiescence in the appropriateness of any of the outstanding rejections. Further, Applicant expressly reserves the right to submit claims of a corresponding scope in another application.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding objections and rejections, and requests an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so. Applicant has incorporated limitations from claims that were objected to and that were indicated to contain allowable subject matter into each of the rejected independent claims. Applicant has taken such action without acquiescing the propriety of the Examiner's rejections. Accordingly, Applicant has provided a clear evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all claims in the present application and respectfully requests an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

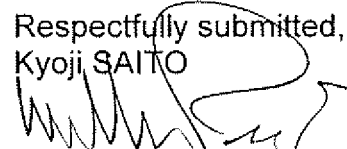
Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

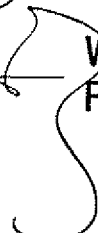
Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

November 16, 2006  
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